

Book of Life, *noun phrase*

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ORIGIN: Perhaps a wry transferred use of the biblical *book of life* the record of the names of those inheriting eternal life.

A comprehensive personal identity document, including marriage-, driving-, and firearm-licences.
Cf. [ID](#). Also *attributive*.

NOTE:

This document was introduced in 1972; initially for whites only (cf. [PASS sense 3](#)), it was in general use from 1986.

1971 *Sunday Times* 14 Nov. 5 The six foolscap-page form which people in South Africa will have to complete for the 'Book of Life' – the Government's new super-identity card – will pry deeply into personal affairs.

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1990 J.G. DAVIS *Land God Made in Anger* 235 All South Africans..have to carry the so-called Book-of-Life. An identification document. It contains all the bearer's details, his date and place of birth, his address, his marriage, everything of an official nature that he's done in his life.

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1 sense

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